

# Harvest Safety

When it's harvest time the pressure is on! Good weather and daylight hours always seem to be at a premium when trying to gather nature's bounty in top condition. Planned maintenance and skilled equipment operation can minimize downtime and reduce potential for mishaps during harvest. The most severe farm tragedies often involve machinery. Missing guards and shields, failure to recognize hazards, and careless operation are common factors in a majority of farm equipment related injuries.

According to a study by Dr. Frederick Rivara, completed in 1997 from data collected in 1990-93 stated that, combines, threshers and hay-processors accounted for 4.7% of the injuries occurring to children up to 19 years of age. Among these, children ages 5-9 were found to be at the greatest risk with 6.6% of the total farm-related injuries to this age group being caused by machinery.

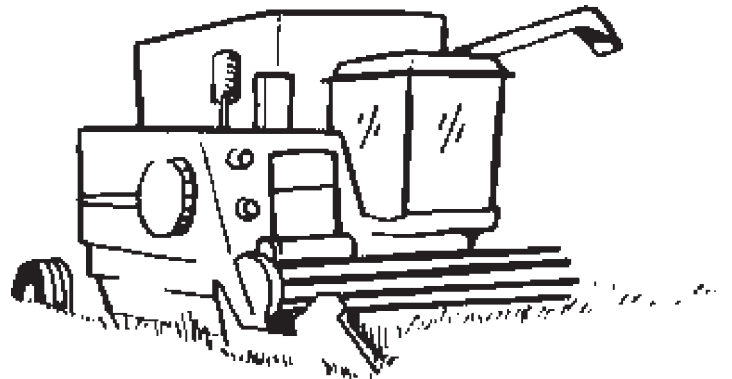
Manufacturers attempt to build safety features into equipment, but some potential hazards can't be completely eliminated without interfering with machine function. For example, if the blades on a rotary mower were completely shielded, they would not cut plant material.

Safe completion of any task depends on knowledge, alertness and hazard awareness. It's natural for us to take pride in our ability to work long hours in pursuit of a goal. Nowhere is this more evident than in harvesting operations. However, fatigue, drowsiness and illness frequently contribute to mishaps in the field.

## **Here are a few things that will help make your harvest season a safe one for the entire family:**

- Carry out preseason maintenance and repair several weeks before harvest.
- Clear plugged equipment only after the power is turned off.
- All guards and shields should be secured before equipment is started.
- Wear comfortable, close-fitting clothing, including sturdy, protective shoes.
- Kids are a "no-no" around machinery. Far too many tragedies occur when youngsters end up in the path of equipment from which the operator's view is restricted.
- Always let someone else know where you are. Check in regularly.
- Keep children off grain transportation equipment.
- Avoid sleep deprivation and extreme physical exhaustion.
- Drugs or alcohol can impede safety.

Harvest can be a great and productive time before the holidays if it's a safe one.



Farm Safety



Just Kids